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NRO REVIEW COMPLETED

22 May 1963

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy for Technology, OSA

SUBJECT : Itek

1. While visiting Itek on 21 May to explain their role in briefing of the Purcell Panel, certain topics came up which I now repeat to you for whatever action you deem necessary. As an aside, let me state that [REDACTED] were anything but charmed at the thought that [REDACTED] of Eastman would have anything to do with the Purcell Panel other than that of an ordinary contractor presenting their own points of view. The gentlemen were obviously miffed at the position which Eastman enjoys in the realm of aerial reconnaissance, in that as makers of the film, they have the privilege of knowing the intricacies of each system utilizing that film. Itek feels that the flow of information between Itek and Eastman Kodak regarding camera systems and the like is all one way, and that Eastman as film makers, exposed to the trade secrets of the various contractors, can capitalize on the ideas of others for their own work. This I offer to you without editorial comment since I am sure that they have played the song to you before.

2. Two other points which they did single out with apparent honest perplexity, were the need for engineering feedback on the CORONA/LANYARD shots and the official go ahead for M2. [REDACTED] was ready to throw in the sponge on what he called the need for engineering feedback, since they have unsuccessfully fought this battle over the years. [REDACTED] was not so eager to capitulate and said he would use every avenue to get Itek's position understood.

3. This all began when I explained to the gentlemen that in their briefing of the Purcell Panel, they were to review the details of their present systems and the systems now programmed as well as future systems and suggest how their present systems could be optimized. [REDACTED] stated, "How can we possibly optimize our equipment when we are prohibited from reviewing the film taken by the cameras?"

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He stated that when Dr. Fubini and McMillan were at Itek the early part of the month, they agreed for the necessity of Itek to technically analyze the film take. From such analysis, Itek could determine whether or not the camera system was functioning as designed and if not, they could take certain measures to optimize the system. Apparently the Air Force did not quite understand what Itek was driving at, and sent a cable to Itek granting them a two-day period following the next mission to meet at Westover for the mission evaluation. Itek pleaded that they were not interested in the mission evaluation, but only in the camera evaluation, and to do so, it would be necessary to go over all the film from a mission.

4. Itek has a proposal to take a group of engineers and let them analyze a complete roll of the next CORONA or LANYARD shot. They stated that for years now they have pleaded with everyone to permit them to analyze the film, and yet for some reason this has been denied them. They made reference to a streak which appeared in the film, when the problem of static electricity building up on the rollers came to the front. Yet when talking to people at NPIC, it was pointed out that this streak had been there for many missions before, yet noone ever bothered to query Itek regarding it and since Itek was prohibited from reviewing the film in order to catch it, it had not been corrected.

5. I allowed that Itek's request did not seem unrealistic, and that I would come back and toss it into the hopper. However, since they had already carried their request to the highest, i.e. Fubini and McMillan, I was not too optimistic as to what could be achieved now.

6. On the M₂ go ahead, [] cited a series of conversations and telephone calls which gave Itek the verbal go ahead on the M₂ system, yet they are waiting for the followup cable confirmation which has yet to arrive. [] alluded to the predicament that Itek now finds itself of either carrying a large overhead without work contracts or simply letting some of their key engineers go with the obvious delays in recruiting new ones and acquiring clearances, when and if additional contracts come their way.

7. [] also stated that Camera #51 for the IDEALIST testing sits dead center. They can't figure out why we would not be content to test the mono version before toying with the much more expensive stereo.

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8. I am out of touch with the Itak proposals and cannot really assess whether or not there is any validity in what they call their present predicaments. I simply pass the above conversation on to you for your information and whatever followup you may think necessary.

9. As a closing complaint, Itak stated that in the past several years, there has been only two instances when they have received the take from the engineering passes over the United States. They query, "What happens to the engineering passes, and who gets the take if Itak doesn't?" I couldn't answer.

(Signed)

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Chief, Programs Staff
(Special Activities)

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